

capacity, and later on behalf of the International (formerly Indian) Society of Naturalists (INSONA) and such affiliates as Professor DrSci Nicholas Polunin's Geneva-based Foundation for Environmental Conservation, aimed at the common well-being of Mankind and Nature. A significant aspect of his committed involvement has been a fruitful partnership for the World Campaign for The Biosphere. Another notable outcome of his personal dedication is INSONA's quarterly journal *Environmental Awareness*, now in its 17th year of publication, with a very impressive supporting panel of internationally-known Consulting Editors.

For a long time the undersigned had cherished a desire to establish 'The Foundation for Environmental Awareness', which finally came into existence on his 60th birthday on 24 November 1993. Dr John R. Vallentyne ('Johnny Biosphere'), of Canada, graced the press-briefing occasion on 1 December 1993 during his visit — 'Biospheric Mission' — to Baroda and elsewhere in the world; the President of INSONA, Dr (Mrs) Mrunalinidevi A. Puar, and members of its Executive Committee, were also present.

#### *Aims of the Foundation*

The Foundation will be devoted to environmental conservation for human welfare, and will endeavour to promote the cause of The Biosphere, which is our *only* life-support system but is already menaced. The Foundation will carry on campaigns and actively crusade for 'environmental awareness'. It will promote scientific field studies on Biodiversity — genes, species, and ecosystems — to save threatened plant and animal wildlife especially on the Indian subcontinent but also elsewhere in the world. The Foundation aspires to encourage budding environmentalists and naturalists by offering scholarships and according recognition to environmental achievers with appropriate awards. The Foundation will promote and help to collate Biosphere Clubs which, with their most fundamentally important objective, should ultimately span the world.

Since the year 1975, the members of the family of the undersigned have donated time, money, and energy, to

establish INSONA and its journal, *Environmental Awareness*, under the stewardship of the former Maharaja of Baroda, the late Fatehsinghrao P. Gaekwad, as its Founding President. Friends and well-wishers have contributed financially to the modest amount invested by the family in launching the Foundation.

The undersigned is the President of the Foundation and the Trustees are Mrs Premlata Oza (wife of Gunavant M. Oza) and their son Mihir Oza — who are involved already in the environmental and conservation movement.

The Foundation is fortunate enough to have a Board of eight international advisers, who are known leaders of repute in the environmental movement. They are (in alphabetical order of family names) Professor Mohamed Kassar (Egypt), Dr Walter J. Lusigi (Kenya), M. A. Partha Sarathy (India), Professor Nicholas Polunin (Switzerland), Professor Richard Evans Schultes (USA), Dr Monkombu S. Swaminathan (India), Dr John R. Vallentyne (Canada), and Dr Arthur H. Westing (USA). With their blessings and moral support, it is hoped that the endeavours of the Foundation will meet with success.

The Foundation needs sincere and solid support from an army of Patrons, well-wishers, and volunteers, in combating the tremendous menace imposed by profligate Humankind on the global environment and its widely-endangered wildlife. The undersigned appeals to the legion of Nature-lovers and prosperous Charitable Trusts, Foundations, and donating agencies, to establish effective partnerships and extend generous funding support for our task to eradicate environmental illiteracy, through 'environmental awareness', on the world's normally-inhabited continents. Epitomizing all is Biosphere Day \*, reminding humanity annually of what it is entirely dependent on and therefore needs above all to take care of.

GUNAVANT M. OZA, *President*  
*The Foundation for Environmental Awareness*  
 Oza Building  
 Salatwada  
 Baroda 390 001  
 India.

\*See the following item. — Ed.

### **Every Day A Biosphere Day: Path for Sustainability**

Ever since the early 1980s when it was proposed by the Foundation for Environmental Conservation, the undersigned Authors have lent support to, and promoted in every way they could, the World Campaign for The Biosphere. Moreover, they have been closely associated with the International (formerly Indian) Society of Naturalists (INSONA), commencing with its establishment in 1975, in the crusade to save natural habitats, ecosystems, forests, and threatened plant and animal wildlife (Oza, 1989). The main targets for attack and needed help have been the schoolchildren (Fig. 1), university students, 'the Man in the street', and the decision-makers. Women from urban localities, and tribal women from rural hilly habitats, have been specially linked with our publicization crusade for The Biosphere as our planetary life-support system, without which our civilization cannot possibly survive (Oza, 1990).

During the course of a year, normally we carry out intensive and extensive conservation endeavours on



FIG. 1. Mrs Premlata Oza addresses a large gathering of schoolchildren in Baroda, to support the declaration of Biosphere Day and highlight the impact of wildlife for human survival. Photo: Sanjay Patel.

various aspects of environment and/or wildlife, for The Biosphere is gravely threatened by human overpopulation. In according due recognition to the spring-time Earth Day, the later World Environment Day (WED, normally on 5 June), and entering into a reciprocal partnership with the Foundation for Environmental Conservation based in Geneva, the motto 'Every Day A Biosphere Day' (Fig. 2) is publicized (Oza, 1991).

The climax of such actions is reached on the 21st of September each year as 'Biosphere Day', which welcomes in the Autumnal Equinox of equal division of night and day in the Northern Hemisphere and similarly the Spring Equinox in the Southern Hemisphere. Since 1991, and thereafter it is hoped in perpetuity, this very special Day is regularly recognized and vehemently celebrated as a vital annual event (Polunin, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994). Such actions, the present Authors believe, will help to eradicate environmental illiteracy from all the world's normally inhabited continents.

During the International Conference on Environmental Education in the Commonwealth, held at the University of Bradford, England, UK, one of us (GMO) highlighted Nicholas Polunin's viewpoints on the health of our Biosphere as indispensable to the well-being of life on our only planet engendering it, and also to the very maintenance of human existence. As proposed by Polunin on 21 September 1991, the same day on the calendar annually is now solemnly observed and duly celebrated very widely in the world as 'Biosphere Day'. It is ardently to be hoped that Polunin's ultimate desire to engender world-wide uprising in support of the Environmental Movement, based on the theme of 'This is Our Biosphere to Cherish and Maintain', and stimulating concerted action to 'ensure for Man and Nature a lastingly robust future', will reach the hearts of people of all ages and cultures throughout the world (Oza & Oza, 1993).

#### Wildlife Awareness Through Art

For the celebrations of WED 1982, we brought out stickers and T-shirts entitled 'Save Trees, Save Our Biosphere', depicting the Indian Laburnum (*Cassia fistula*), while for 1981 other 'Save Our Biosphere' stickers were designed, depicting the Indian Blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*), the Kashmir Deer or Hangul (*Cervus elaphus hanglu*); and other wildlife, to help sound the alarm on behalf of wildlife and its habitat at the global level (Gaekwad & Oza, 1981; Oza, 1982). It was then hoped most ardently that these and other, continuing endeavours would go a long way in attracting the attention of the world's population to the fragility of The Biosphere and the paramount requirement of preserving the habitats of the world's most diverse ecobiomes.

#### Environment and Religion

Thus, for more than two decades the Authors carried on a campaign to educate the decision-makers and generate interest among the general public and schoolchildren of India (Fig. 3) for due *Environmental Awareness* (the name of their Journal). To lend further stimulus, we brought out special posters entitled 'SAVE TREES, SAVE INDIA', linking environment with Hinduism, and in one case involving the Peepal Tree (*Ficus religiosa*).

Our efforts to convince religious leaders on environmental and conservation aspects have met with success, following presentation of our posters to religious leaders



FIG. 2. 'Every Day A Biosphere Day' Sticker to generate global awareness.

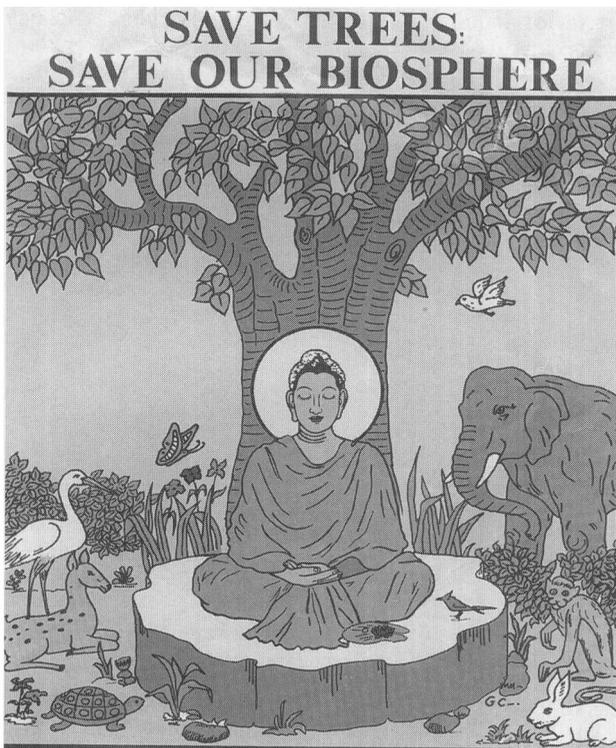
with a request to them to convince their devotees of the vital importance *inter alia* of maintaining trees to save our Biosphere for human welfare. Fig. 4 is of our poster 'Save Trees: Save Our Biosphere' and introduces the Buddhist perception of Nature.

#### Movement to Save Our Biosphere

Wildlife has continued to be slaughtered for economic gain or mere human 'pleasure' all over the world, and so we launched another campaign by bringing out greetings postcards requesting people not to encourage trading in animals' skins and other products (Oza, 1986). The designs, gratefully permitted for use by the Friends of the Earth, concentrated on the *endangered* Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*), a marine turtle (the Olive Ridley, *Lepidochelys olivacea*), the Marsh Crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*), the Saltwater Crocodile (*C. porosus*), and the Zebra (*Equus zebra*). We desired to convey to the world



FIG. 3. 'Johnny Biosphere' winning the hearts of very numerous Baroda schoolchildren to become partners in the environmental efforts of the Authors. Photo: Himanshu Pahad.



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF NATURALISTS

FIG. 4. *Save Trees: Save Our Biosphere* Poster on 'Buddhist Perception of Nature'.

due realization that, whereas the trees and wildlife can live without Man, he cannot well continue without them!

We plead for understanding support for our modest attempts, from interested NGOs and individuals throughout the world, to activate and advance this Movement to Save Our Biosphere. We appeal to all who are convinced of such needs, to celebrate 'Every Day (as) A Biosphere Day' in their day-to-day lives — to pave the way for an equitably sustainable future for Mankind and Nature. People everywhere should realize that their civilization is really an integral part of Nature. Human survival is de-

pendent upon the well-being of The Biosphere and our prudent use of the living resources of the Earth. If only Mankind would realize these fundamental truths and act rationally, 'sustainable development' should follow.

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PREMLATA OZA,

*Joint Secretary of INSONA & Managing  
Editor of Environmental Awareness;  
Trustee of the Foundation for  
Environmental Awareness,*

&

*GUNAVANT M. OZA, President  
The Foundation for Environmental Awareness;  
General Secretary of INSONA and  
Founding Editor of Environmental Awareness  
Oza Building  
Salatwada  
Baroda 390 001  
India.*

### Optimum Human Population About One-third of Present Number

'Until Cultures change radically, the optimum number of people to exist on the planet at any one time lies in the vicinity of 1.5 to 2 [thousand million] people', three California ecologists estimated in an article published recently in the journal *Population and Environment*.

Gretchen C. Daily, of the Energy and Resources Group at the University of California-Berkeley and Paul R. and Anne H. Ehrlich, of the Center for Conservation Biology at Stanford University, said that figure, 'if achieved reasonably soon, would also likely permit the maximum number of *Homo sapiens* to live a good life over the long run'. 'Determination of an "optimum" world population size involves social decisions about the life-styles to be lived and the distribution of those life-styles among individuals in the population', the scientists continued.

#### *Problems of Choice*

Between a minimum viable population-size (one just large enough to ensure against extinction) and the maximum number that can be supported by Earth's life-support systems ('housed and nurtured by methods analogous to those used to raise battery chickens'), determining an optimum becomes a problem of choosing what life-styles are to be led.

Community-level, national, and international, discussions of life-style preferences will be required before population-size targets can be established.

The team predicated their estimate on a desire to preserve the great diversity of human cultures and also to secure basic human well-being for all the world's people,